Chlamydia trachomatis Infection

What is chlamydia?

It is a disease caused by bacteria called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Infection with *C. trachomatis* may result in urethritis, epididymitis, cervicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), and other conditions.

What are the symptoms of chlamydia?

Men and women infected with chlamydia may have a discharge from the penis or vagina, and may notice burning while urinating. Infections in the rectum may cause problems or pain. In many instances, both men and woman will not notice any symptoms (50% of women and 25% of men.)

How soon do symptoms appear?

If symptoms do occur, they usually show up within 1 to 2 weeks after being exposed.

How is chlamydia diagnosed?

You need to be tested at your local health department or your private doctor's office. A laboratory test will be done to see if you have chlamydia.

How is chlamydia spread?

Chlamydia is spread through sexual contact. This includes penis to vagina and penis to rectum contact. It can also be spread from mother to child during birth.

Who gets chlamydia?

Any person who has sex can be infected with *Chlamydia.* Chlamydia is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the United States.

What is the treatment for chlamydia?

Chlamydia is treated with an antibiotic generally in pill form, and it is important to finish all prescribed medication.

What happens if chlamydia goes untreated?

Without treatment, there is a good chance that complications will develop from this infection. Women frequently develop pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), a painful condition that occurs when the infection spreads throughout the reproductive organs. PID

can lead to sterilization in females. Men may suffer from pain and swelling in the scrotal area, and chlamydial infection may also lead to sterility in men if left untreated.

How can chlamydia be prevented?

Not having sex is the only sure way to avoid getting chlamydia and any other STD. Otherwise, limiting the number of one's sexual partners reduces the chance of being exposed. Using condoms correctly with all partners will decrease the possibility of becoming infected. If you think you are infected, avoid any sexual contact until you have visited a doctor, hospital, local health department or STD clinic. If you are infected, notify your sex partners immediately so they can be tested and treated.

IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE, PLEASE CALL THE VIRGINIA STD/AIDS HOTLINE AT 1-800-533-4148.

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